



Nike

The story of Nike begins with war. Nike was the Greek Goddess of Victory who, according to mythology, flew around battlefields rewarding worthy combatants with glory and fame. This name is now associated with the most valuable sports brand in the world. And it just so happens that one of the company's founders was a war hero. After military service, Bill Bowerman became a track coach at the University of Oregon. He would coach 22 Olympic athletes during his twenty year career before co-creating Nike, a company that in 2012 made over 24.1 billion dollars in revenue.

Bowerman was obsessed with making a better running shoe. Bowerman wanted something light with lots of grip. And he tried using all sorts of materials to achieve this, from animal skins to a variety of plastics, metals and rubbers. One morning in 1971, Bowerman's wife suggested he use a waffle iron to form the grip pattern for the soles of his shoes. He poured a urethane compound into the waffle iron right there at the breakfast table and was immediately convinced. Three years later Nike released the Waffle Trainer.

But that's only half the story. Phil Knight, one of Bowerman's former track students, would make an impromptu trip to Japan in the early 1960's which would inevitably get the ball rolling for the company. Knight had recently finished an MBA from Stanford and was looking to start his own business. He had tried many of Bowerman's shoe designs as a member of his track team but decided the high quality and low cost of Japanese shoes would be the best way to start a successful business. In Kobe, Japan, Knight met with corporate executives from a shoe company called Onitsuka Tiger (which is now owned by Asics). At the meeting, Knight convinced the business execs to give him the distribution rights for Onitsuka shoes in the western United States.

In 1964 Knight and Bowerman agreed on a partnership based on Knight's idea of selling Japanese shoes in America. Their company was called 'Blue Ribbon Sports'. Knight began selling Onitsuka shoes out of his car at sporting events. He made \$8,000 in his first year. In his second he made \$20,000.

By 1970 Knight had sold a million dollars' worth of shoes. In 1971 Bowerman and Knight started making their own shoes with the world-renowned swoosh design and changed their company's name to Nike. As of 2012, Nike employed more than 44,000 people worldwide and in 2017 the brand alone was estimated to be worth \$29.6 billion.

Source:

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/gadgets/a21841/nike-waffle-iron/>

Vocab Match

Name: _____

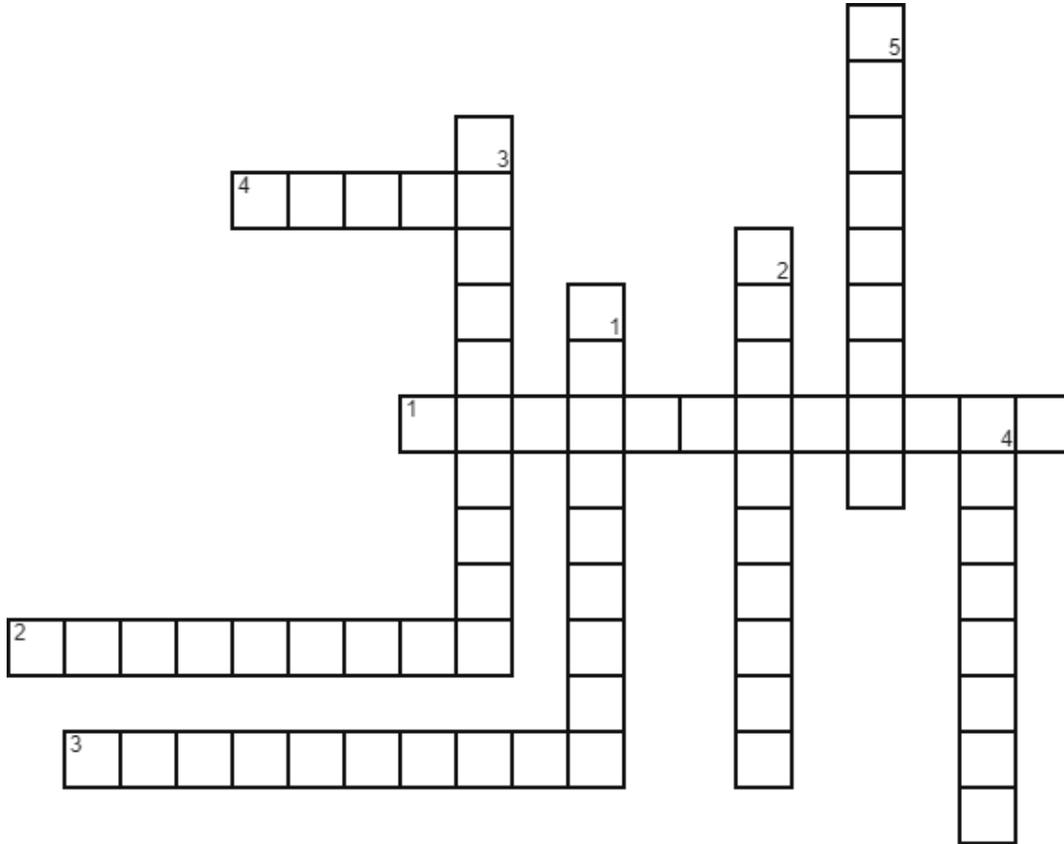
Word	Answer	Definition
1. Mythology	1. ____	a. adj - without planning
2. Combatants	2. ____	b. adverb - natural progression
3. Associated	3. ____	c. adj – known by many people
4. Obsessed	4. ____	d. noun - a person or group that fights
5. Convinced	5. ____	e. verb - connected or related
6. Impromptu	6. ____	f. adj - all thoughts focused on one thing
7. Inevitably	7. ____	g. noun - traditional stories usually about a hero or a type of god
8. Execs	8. ____	h. noun - informal for the word executives
9. Distribution	9. ____	i. noun – giving products to stores/business that sell to customers
10. Renowned	10. ____	j. verb - to be sure

Discussion Topics

1. What is your favorite sports brand? Why do you like it?
2. Have you ever thought about starting your own business? What was your idea?
3. What do you know about Japan? Have you ever been there?
4. How much is too much to pay for a pair of shoes?
5. Do you know any other stories from Greek mythology?

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Across	Down
<p>1. noun – giving products to stores/business that sell to customers</p> <p>2. verb - to be sure</p> <p>3. adverb - natural progression</p> <p>4. noun – informal for the word executives</p>	<p>1. noun - traditional stories usually about a hero or a type of god</p> <p>2. noun - a person or group that fights</p> <p>3. verb - connected or related</p> <p>4. adj - all thoughts focused on one thing</p> <p>5. adj - without planning</p>

Name: _____

Quiz

1) Nike is the Greek Goddess of what?

a. glory b. shoes c. victory d. speed

2) How did the Goddess of Victory reward fighters?

a. glory and fame b. games and glory c. flames and furies d. fames and worries

3) What did Bill Bowerman do after military service?

a. went to the Olympics b. started Nike c. became a track coach d. started a university

4) How many Olympic athletes did Bill Bowerman coach?

a. 23 b. 21 c. 22 d. 24

5) What was Bill Bowerman obsessed with?

a. making urethane b. making money c. making a better waffle d. making a better running shoe

6) Why did Phil Knight like Japanese shoes?

a. low design and high cost b. high quality and low cost c. low cost and high design d. low anime and high manga

7) What is the new name of Onitsuka Tiger?

a. Adidas b. Asics c. Nike d. Mizuno

8) When was the Blue Ribbon Sports company created?

a. 1967 b. 1964 c. 1966 d. 1965

9) How much money did Blue Ribbon Sports make in its second year in business?

a. \$8,000 b. \$10,000 c. \$100,000 d. \$20,000

10) When did the swoosh design appear on Nike shoes?

a. 1970 b. 1985 c. 1981 d. 1971

Key

Crossword	
Across	Down
1. distribution 2. convinced 3. inevitably 4. execs	1. mythology 2. combatants 3. associated 4. obsessed 5. impromptu

Matching	Quiz
1. g	1. c
2. d	2. a
3. e	3. c
4. f	4. c
5. j	5. d
6. a	6. b
7. b	7. b
8. h	8. b
9. i	9. d
10. c	10. d

PROJECT:
 Students think of their own sports brand and pitch their ideas to the class.